



The Muskoka District of ONTARIO.

TORONTO LITH CO

MUSKOKA
 ILLUSTRATED

WITH • DESCRIPTIVE • NARRATIVE
OF THIS PICTURESQUE REGION

✦ BY G. MERCER ADAM ✦

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TORONTO.

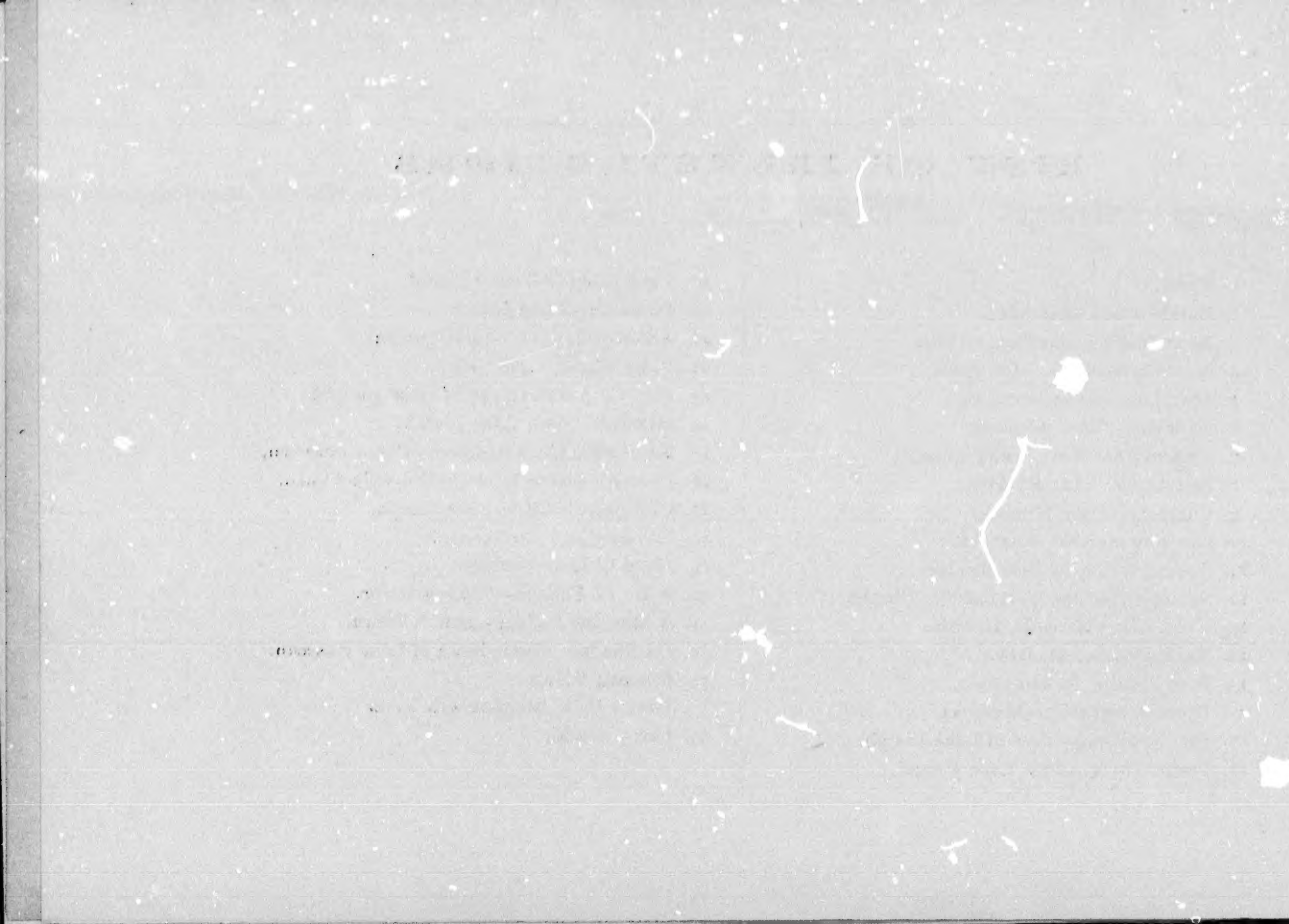
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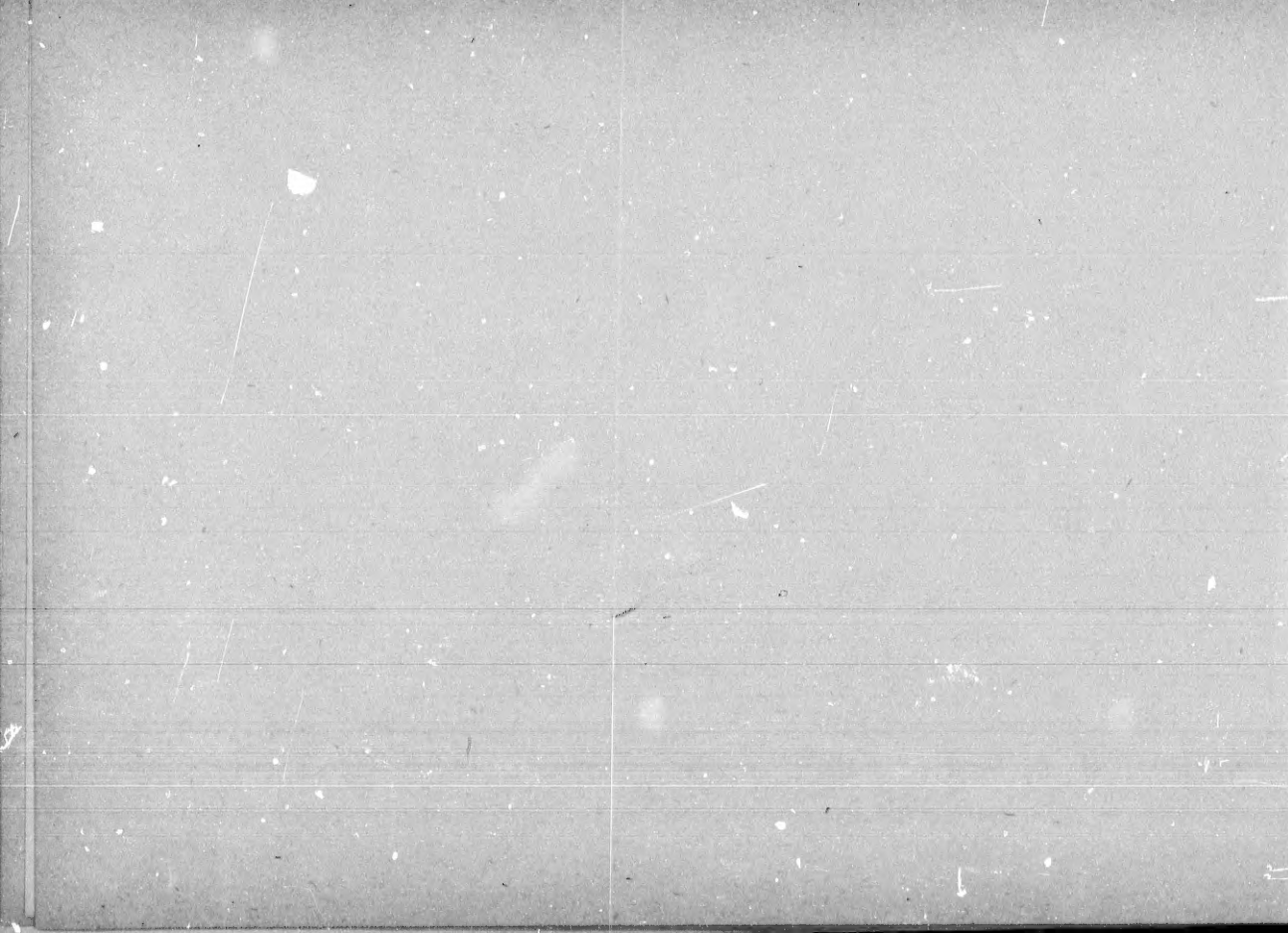


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THE MUSKOKA DISTRICT.*

BY G. MERCER ADAM.

f places of desirable summer resort there are now many in Canada to which the wearied and over-worked professional man or devotee of commerce may hasten to reinvigorate the system by the restorative influences of a change of scene and air. Few of these resorts possess greater attractions than do the lakes and woodlands of the Muskoka District, in the bracing atmosphere of which almost every essential will be found for the recuperation of invalidism, for the "setting-up" of the annually-increasing army of "run-downs," or for the delight and entertain-

ment of those who may have the good fortune to be more or less robust. To emancipate oneself at intervals from the toils of business—to determine to turn one's back upon the depressing influences of routine occupation—is now happily a recognized necessity. Quitting commercial and industrial centres and hieing off to give a filip to the mind by a few weeks' recreation amid Nature's solitudes, is, moreover, a wise and laudable act, the mental and physical refreshment of which is well nigh incalculable. To say more on this point seems unnecessary, unless we add that he

* In the preparation of this sketch the writer deems it proper to say that he has occasionally availed himself of passages from articles formerly contributed by him to the *Canadian Monthly*, and to that section of *Picturesque Canada* which deals with the "Georgian Bay and the Muskoka Lakes."

who sets out on the excursion we are about to take will find it mentally and materially advantageous to put money, if but a little, in his purse, and to take a friend along, or better still, to join a small party of kindred spirits whose common aim is the quest of mental and physical health, not by fashionable dissipation, but by the soothing influences of congenial companionship, daily sun-baths, and a more or less brief period of repose.

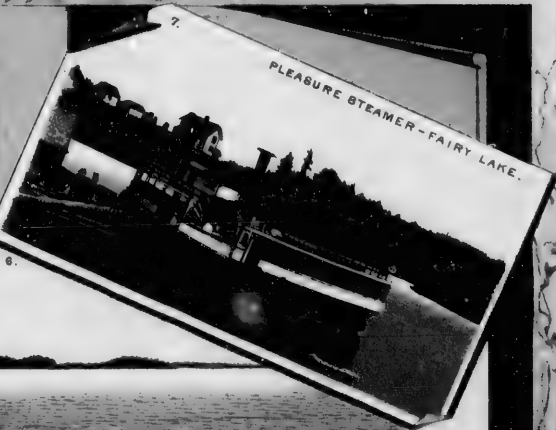
Our tour will at present be confined to the region illustrated by the artist, though at any point, if the tourist should desire, the Muskoka excursion may readily be extended so as to embrace the interesting region of the Upper Lakes, where the air, in these higher latitudes, is still more bracing, and where the scenery rises in picturesqueness and grandeur, not only in the upper reaches of the Georgian Bay, but in the ampler surroundings of the great inland sea of Lake Superior. This further trip, as we have said, we do not at present enter upon, though the tourist, should he determine to take it, will find it perhaps the most delightful excursion of any in Ontario. Now that the fine boats of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company ply on these upper waters, the trip to Port Arthur divides public favour with the steamboat voyage down the St. Lawrence to which

many tourists unhesitatingly prefer it. The varied and pleasing experiences of this trip, the bracing air, the grandeur and beauty of the ever-changing scenery, and the tranquillity which the absence of all hurry, bustle or care infuses into the soul, are worth all the physic compounded by the apothecaries.

Our present excursion has, besides its health-giving qualities and the charm of picturesqueness, a certain historic interest, both antiquarian and modern—antiquarian in connection with the sad record of the early French Missions in the region, and modern in the romantic story of settlement in the Free Grant Lands of the Muskoka District. Comparatively recent as has been the white settlement of the region, the area just south of the Free Grant Lands, bounded on the north by the River Severn and on the south by the Nottawasaga River, was once populous with the lodges of the Huron tribe, and their villages and hunting-grounds, in a fateful era, were the theatre of events of thrilling interest in the annals of Canada. The story connects itself with the first half of the seventeenth century, when the French colony on the St. Lawrence, after the death of Champlain, was struggling to maintain itself against the ceaseless enmity of its Iroquois foes—the penalty of



CANOEING-LAKE MUSKOKA.



PLEASURE STEAMER-FAIRY LAKE.



PORTAGING-LAKE MUSKOKA.



espousing the Huron cause and of a friendly compact with other allied branches of the Algonquin race. At this period the Huron country had a population variously estimated at from twenty to thirty thousand souls. In the heart of this community the Church had founded its "Wilderness Mission," and with heroic zeal and a constancy that may well extort our reverential homage, the faithful Black Robes had for a number of years prosecuted their arduous Christian work. Each successive season added to the peril of their task, for the tribal wars increased in virulence, and no overtures could appease Iroquois wrath. In 1648-9 the blow fell on the Huron settlements with sudden and appalling force, and the outposts of the Church in the region were engulfed in the common ruin. The whole Huron nation was almost rooted out and their country laid waste, while the Jesuit Fathers were put to death with fiendish ferocity. Only a small remnant of the Hurons escaped slaughter, and abandoning their country fled for succour, by way of Lake Nipissing and the Ottawa, to Quebec. The story, had we space here to relate it, is almost too tragic to recount; yet scarcely any in history is more sublime in its record of suffering, peril, and death. After the lapse of over two centuries almost all

memory of the terrible events of the time has passed from even the Canadian mind. Nature herself seems to have forgotten the tragedy, for "the forest has long since resumed its sway over the spot." As the present writer has elsewhere said, only to the student of history, the antiquary or the annalist, has the drear story any interest. Even the settler in the district is far from familiar with the bye-gone tale. Modern pioneering in the region where the events occurred troubles its head as little over the drama as it concerns itself with the ravages of Attila or the invasion of the Goths. To the tourist of to-day the main reminders of the story are the presence here and there of lingering remnants of the great Huron nation by which the region was once peopled, and the names of the lakes and bays, the streams and villages of the district, such as Nottawasaga, Penetanguishene, Couchiching, Muskoka, and other local Indian appellatives.

A glance at the map will show what recent years have done for this interesting district, in bringing it within the embrace of the railway system of the continent; while the illustrations are speaking evidences of the invasion of the settler and tourist into the old solitudes of the forest. Where was once a realm of forest-wealth and tangled growths

of interlacing boughs, with here and there a faintly traced pathway or blazed trail, which only the Indian or the experienced woodman could find his way through, there are clearings now open to the sunlight, fertile farms and busy industries, and a net-work of railroads, highways, and other means of communication, which tap the lakes at all points, and bring happily together the outer and inner world of life, work, and enjoyment.

To reach the region on our present excursion, we shall avail ourselves of the facilities of the Northern Division of the Grand Trunk, one of the earliest lines of railway in the Province, which has recently been acquired by the G. T. R. Company. The N. and N.-W. Division of this now historic railroad embraces the lines that tap the Georgian Bay at Penetanguishene, and at Collingwood, with the extension to Meaford, together with the main line northward, which skirts the foot of the Muskoka lakes, on to Lake Nipissing and the connection there with the through line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, to Manitoba and the Far West. The Muskoka tourist, at his option, may take return tickets for Gravenhurst, the key to the labyrinth of waters of the district, or tickets to include the all-round trip on the lakes, with the privilege of extending the tour by stage to Parry Sound and returning by the

Georgian Bay *via* Penetanguishene to Toronto. The distance from Toronto to Gravenhurst is 120 miles, which is covered in five hours, or by fast express in the season in a little over three hours. Usually the tourist will find Pullman saloon and dining cars at his service, and on the night express a "sleeper."

On leaving Toronto, as we have said, by the northern division of the G. T. R., the road passes through the fast filling-up suburbs of the Provincial capital into the old settled county of York, close by the valley of the Humber, the once water highway which conducted the Iroquois warrior into the lair of the Huron. After passing Weston, with the Caledon Hills in the distance, the thriving character of the villages in the line of Yonge Street—the old military highway to the north—is hardly seen, as the railway runs rather wide of them. There is a constant ascent for about five and twenty miles, where we reach the watershed, the streams north and south of it flowing into Lakes Simcoe and Ontario respectively. Just before reaching the height of land we pass the Oak Ridges—the site of a French settlement, formed about the close of the last century by some officers of the noblesse order who had fought on the royalist side in the French Revolution. North of the



CRUISING ON LAKE MUSKOKA.

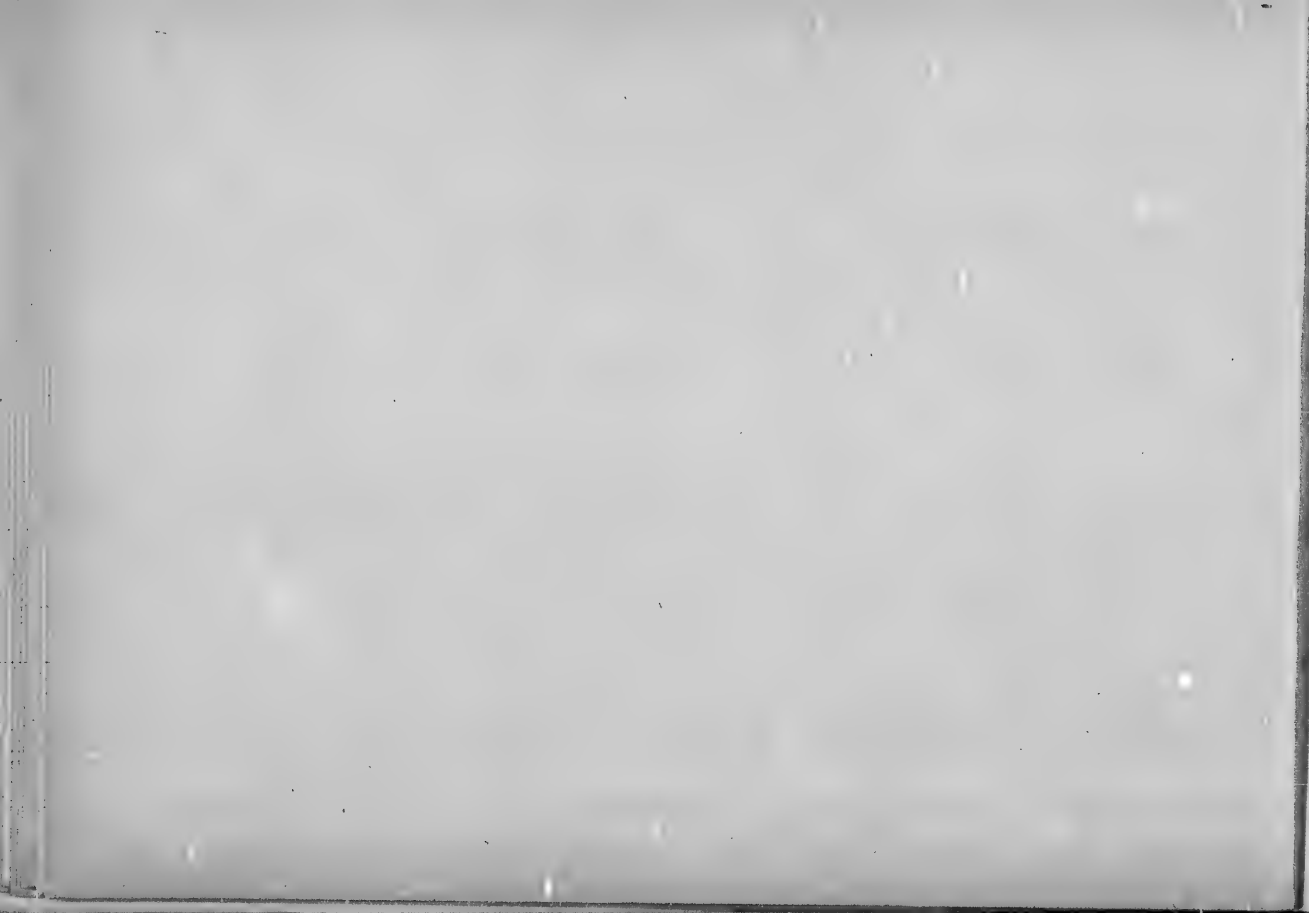


CAMPING—LAKE MUSKOKA.

POWYH FALLS NEAR BRACEBRIDGE
11.

BEAUMARIS, LAKE MUSKOKA.





Ridges is Newmarket, the chief town of the county of York, with the pleasantly situated village of Aurora near by. Just beyond is Holland Landing, the old terminus of Yonge Street, and the commencement of water communication northward to Lake Simcoe in the era before railways. Passing the thriving town of Bradford and Lefroy (Belle Ewart) just beyond, we get our first glimpse of the the waters of Lake Simcoe, and soon pull up at Allandale Junction, with its pretty little station, and the exciting rush of passengers for the refreshment buffets and the dining rooms on the railway platform as the train arrives. The view from Allandale, of Barrie opposite, the long sweep of Kempenfeldt Bay, and the wooded shores of either side, softly receding into the bosom of Lake Simcoe, is one of the most perfect bits of nature the Province can boast. Barrie is the county town of Simcoe, and has a population of about 5,000 souls. The town derives its name from Commodore Barrie, who commanded a British naval squadron on Lake Ontario during the War of 1812. It has an interesting military and naval history immediately succeeding the war, and with Penetanguishene, on an inlet of the Georgian Bay, it shares the honour of long being one of the remotest and most inland military posts

of Old England. The present-day aspect of the town is singularly attractive. It possesses a handsome town-hall and market, a commodious court house, a well equipped collegiate institute, many fine churches, and a number of elegant residences, situate on a finely wooded ridge that forms a picturesque background to the pretty sheet of water called after the naval hero who went down, "with twice four hundred men," in the *Royal George*. There is also a fine civic park, and in the neighbourhood is a new summer hotel, a favourite resort of the families of Toronto and Hamilton citizens.

A short run brings us to Orillia, and the prettily situated town, on Lake Couchiching, which may also be reached by water by way of "the Narrows," the link of steamboat connection between Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching (Lake of Many Winds). The railway passes over the Narrows by means of a long swing bridge, built on piles, underneath and about which, in the reeds and clear shallows of the Lake, wing and fin temptingly congregate. Orillia and its vicinity is prominently associated with early Indian history, in connection with the tragic French Missions in the middle of the seventeenth century, of which we have already made mention. The modern town is attrac-

tively situated on ground which shelves up somewhat abruptly from the lake, and from the heights the outlook on the latter, on any bright day in summer, is one of rare glistening beauty. There is good boating and fishing on the lake, and, within easy hail of the town, the sportsman, in the proper season, can bag a good showing of partridge and duck. Continuing our journey we come to Washago and Severn Bridge, at the further end of the waters of Couchiching, which here find their way by the Severn River to the Georgian Bay. At Washago the district becomes singularly interesting to the geologist and sternly appalling to the poor free grant settler. Here occurs a curious uptilting of the ground floor of the primeval rock, and for miles great masses of gneiss seem to bar all progress save, it would seem, to the realms of the Cyclops.

After passing Severn Bridge the granite frown upon Nature's face visibly softens, and mercifully so for the poor settler, for we now enter on the tract of land which the Provincial Government, by the Free Grant and Homestead Act of 1868, reserved as the territorial heritage of the immigrant settler. The area of these Free Grant Lands is very considerable, extending north and south from the Severn River to Lake Nipissing, and east and

west, from the Georgian Bay to the Ottawa. The Muskoka and Perry Sound districts alone comprise nearly six thousand square miles, and hitherto the conditions of settlement have been very advantageous to the *bona fide* settler. For the most part the Free Grant territory is a wild region, suited more for grazing than for agricultural purposes, though despite the amount of rock and water with which it is bestrewn, there are many pockets of rich alluvial land where a variety of root crops and the hardy cereals do well; while, with a little cultivation, grapes and strawberries can be raised in abundance. In the early history of the region the first settlers certainly had a hard time of it, and we have heard many harrowing stories of the rigours of residence in Muskoka and of the hardships of isolation bravely endured by the early pioneers, which for a time greatly deterred immigration. But though long the abode of solitude, save for the few hardy pioneers, and the many bears and wolves which used to infest the region, the district has of recent years rapidly been brought within reach of civilization, and here and there under a fair measure of cultivation. The truth about Muskoka is happily not now a matter of doubt; it has had its day of small things and the settler his hour of trial. Isolated from his fel-

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HOTEL LIFE, MUSKOKA DISTRICT.



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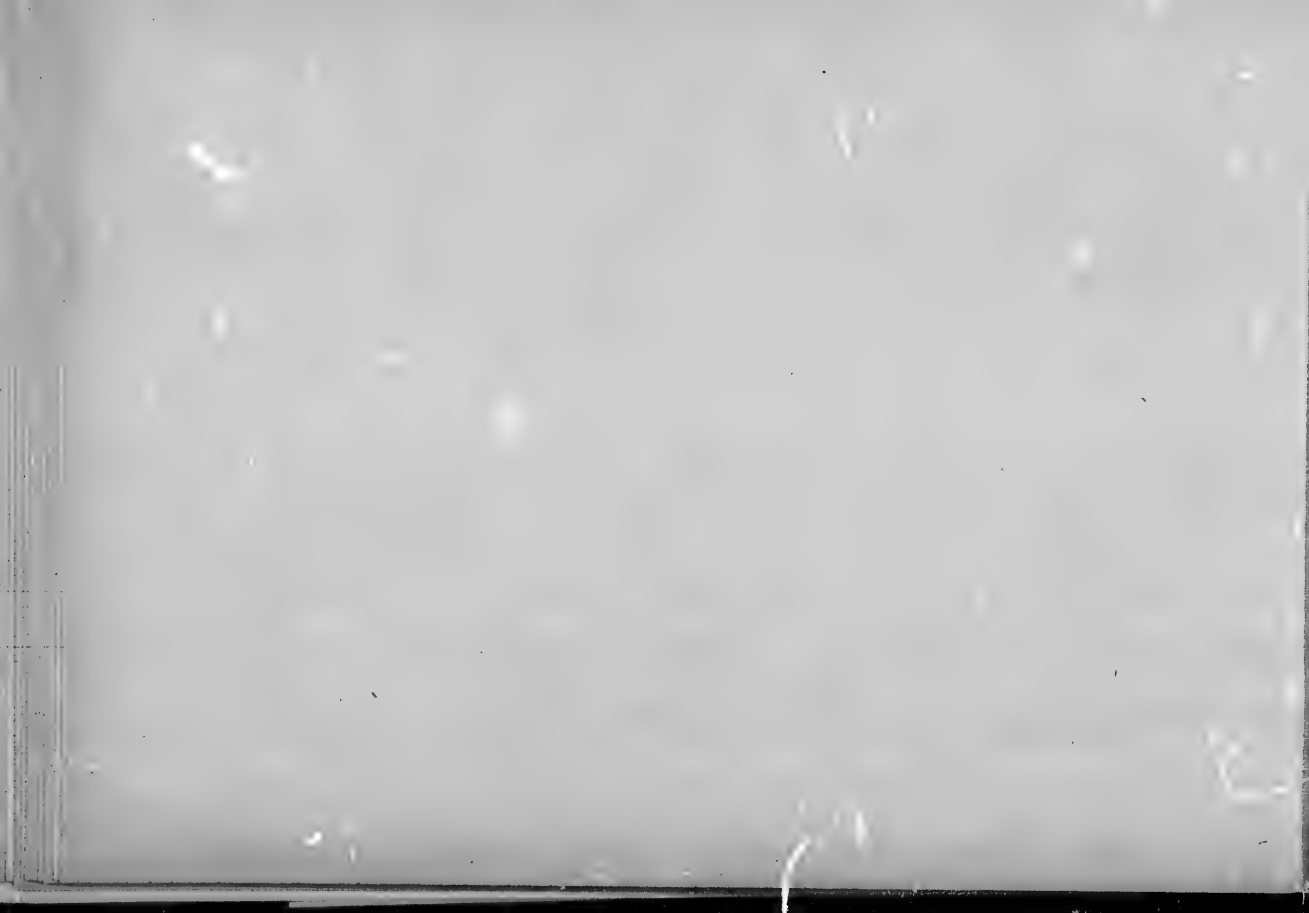
RAFTING-LAKE MUSKOKA.



SUMMER RESIDENCE-MUSKOKA DISTRICT.

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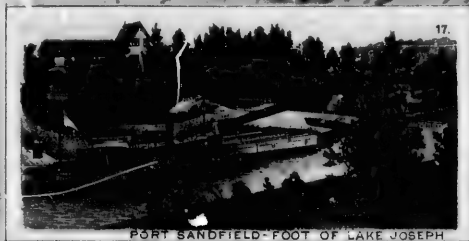
lows, the pioneer's lot was set in shadows. If he had to cross a stream, it was upon logs; and his nearest neighbour may once have been a week's journey off. His temporal well-being, whatever hardships he has had to undergo, is now beyond dispute. Within the space of a score of years, men who have taken up land in the district, and who brought little with them save their families and their pluck, have each their homestead and clearing, with well-filled barns and more or less stock. The climate on the whole is delightful, particularly round the lakes, and has not the extremes of temperature experienced in the older settled portions of the Province. For stock-raising and dairying, and for the cultivation of small fruit, there are few sections of Ontario so suitable. Cattle live and fatten in the woods for fully seven months in the year. In the woods, indeed, they find their most succulent pasturage, and from choice they will leave a clover field to browse on the shoots of the young basswood and maple. For sheep-raising the rocky land is also excellent, as vegetation is both nutritious and abundant. The lumberman, too, has his harvest in the district, and though the best of the hardwood is being rapidly thinned out, there yet falls to his axe many sturdy giants of the forest. The timber products

of the region are oak, birch, ash, pine, spruce, tamarack and hemlock. From the bark of the latter the settler, if he cares, can add considerably to his sources of revenue at the hands of the Bracebridge tanner, while his pine finds ready sale for the building of the summer cottages so plentifully seen on the picturesque capes and islands round the lakes. Fruit and vegetable culture and his catch from the lakes further add to his income from the summer tourist and hotel keeper; while in winter, if a good sportsman, he can keep his own larder bountifully provided by the products of the chase. Whatever his disadvantages, it will be seen, that the lot of the immigrant in Muskoka need not be an unhappy one.

But leaving the resources of the region, let us now introduce the reader to the Muskoka lakes, at the approach to which we had for the time left him. Arriving at Gravenhurst, the railway journey for the Muskoka tourist is completed, and the train for the lakes is shunted down a side line to the wharf, while the through train steams off for Lake Nipissing and its C. P. R. connections with the Far West. Little is seen of Gravenhurst from the station or the wharf, partly for the reason that the village was recently devastated by fire, and partly from the fact that it lies a little aside

from the line of the railway, on the shores of Gull Lake. At the wharf the rough picturesqueness of the region is dominated by the lumbering operations of many saw mills, and the eye is fain to seek the placid beauty of the water as a relief to the uncouth disarray of the scene on shore. Lake-ward all is inviting, and one or more of the trim little steamboats of the Muskoka and Nipissing Navigation Co. at the moorings is impatient to be off. Let us pause here to pay the tribute of our admiration to the enterprise of this company, and particularly to its zealous and genial Managing-Director, Mr. A. P. Cockburn, formerly the Dominion representative of the District, to whom the settler and tourist public are heavily indebted for the travelling facilities so well provided for navigating the lakes of the region. Steam navigation on these beautiful water-stretches, thanks to Mr. Cockburn's energy and public spirit, was begun so long ago as 1866, and the service furnished by this gentleman and his partners has since been periodically increased and improved so as to anticipate and fully meet the annually growing wants of the Muskoka travelling public. A like service is also rendered to the settler and the tourist by the Muskoka and Nipissing Navigation Co in other sections of this attrac-

tive region. The steamboats of the company will be found plying on the Georgian Bay, from Penetanguishene to Parry Sound and French River; and on the Magnetewan River, from Burk's Falls to the further end of Ah Mic Lake. The boats on these various lines are all well manned, well equipped, and in all respects safe, clean, and comfortable. What is of no less importance, the tourist will soon discover for himself, namely, that the officers and employees of the boats are attentive and courteous; while on all of them it is possible to get a good and appetizing meal. On the Muskoka Lake the company's steamers are three in number—the *Nipissing*, *Kenosha*, and *Oriole*. The service of the latter is confined to the lower lake (Muskoka), plying daily between Gravenhurst and Bracebridge, and semi-weekly between the former port and Bala. The *Nipissing*, in addition to her service on Muskoka Lake, makes a daily trip from the head of Lake Rosseau and back. The *Kenosha* plys also daily between Gravenhurst and Port Cockburn, at the head of Lake Joseph. The length of the single trip of the two latter steamers is about fifty miles; and they are both timed to make daily connection with the railway service at Gravenhurst and Bracebridge, for the convenience of tourists going either north or south.



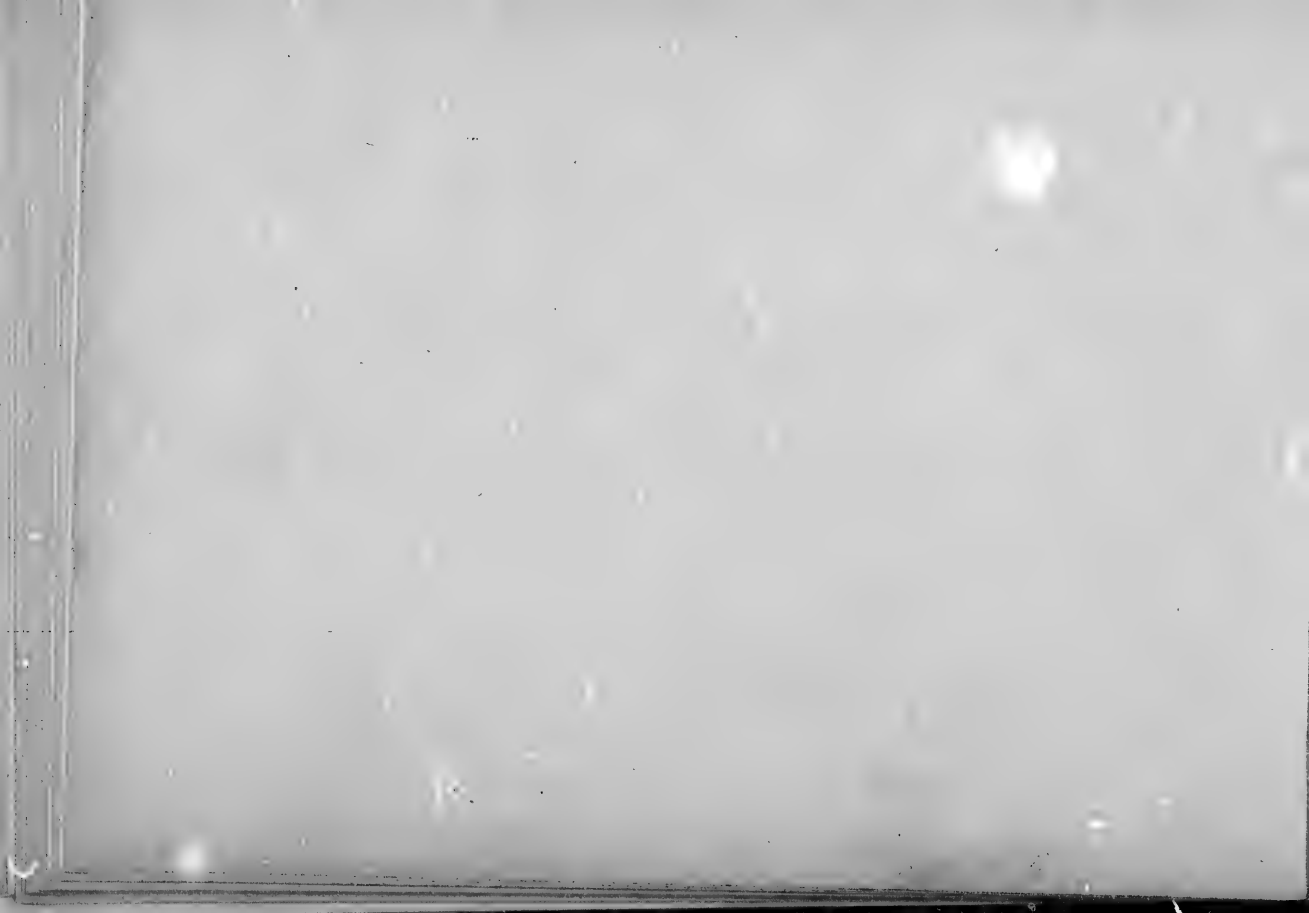
PORT SANDFIELD-FOOT OF LAKE JOSEPH



JUVENILE AQUATICS-MUSKOKA



PORT CARLING, INDIAN RIVER



The "up" boats leave Muskoka wharf daily about two o'clock p.m., and bring the tourist through the length of Lake Muskoka to the head either of Lake Rosseau or of Lake Joseph—according to the steamer he may board—in time for an evening meal and a comfortable bed. The "down" boats arrive at Gravenhurst shortly after one o'clock p.m., in time for the trains going, as we have indicated above, either north to Lake Nipissing, or south to Hamilton and Toronto.

Since the above was in print, we learn that it is the design of the M. & N. Navigation Co., during the months of July and August in each year, to run the boats of the Company twice daily up and down the lakes, an extension of the steamboat service which no doubt will be much appreciated by the travelling public. During these months, therefore, a steamer will leave Gravenhurst, going north daily at 7.30 a.m. and at 1.45 p.m., taking the tourist to the head of navigation, both on Lake Rosseau and Lake Joseph. Going south, there will also be two daily services during July and August, from Rosseau at 7 a.m. and 1.15 p.m., and from Port Cockburn at 7.30 a.m. and 12.40 p.m., the steamers on both lines stopping at the usual ports of call. There will be a daily service to Bracebridge and a tri-weekly one to Bala.

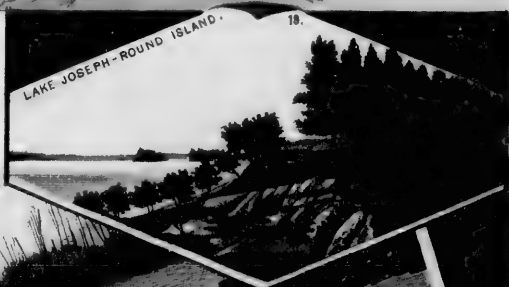
The three lakes that specially comprise the Muskoka system are Lakes Muskoka, Rosseau and Joseph. Their configuration delightfully defies description. On the yellow ground tint of Captain Rogers' admirable map of the region, the water surface of the lakes looks as if one had upser a bottle of green ink over the paper and the fluid had run about the sheet in the most fantastic and self-willed fashion, circling round innumerable islands of all forms and sizes, leaving here a jutting out point and there making a deep and promiscuously formed indentation. We know of no lake system which Nature has so capriciously and picturesquely formed. Geologically speaking, Nature seems first to have scooped out the hollow basin; then to have stirred the volcanic fires underneath, which shot up an eruptive array of elevated points and dots, of every conceivable size and shape; and, finally, to have poured a flood of brown water in and round about the whole, leaving only the tops of the irregular and detached masses unsubmerged. The accuracy of this attempt at a description of the plan of the lakes, the tourist, as he leaves Gravenhurst, if he is not absorbed in the scramble for dinner, will note and attest. Passing "The Narrows," which seem almost to close the waters of Lake Muskoka from intrusion into the port at

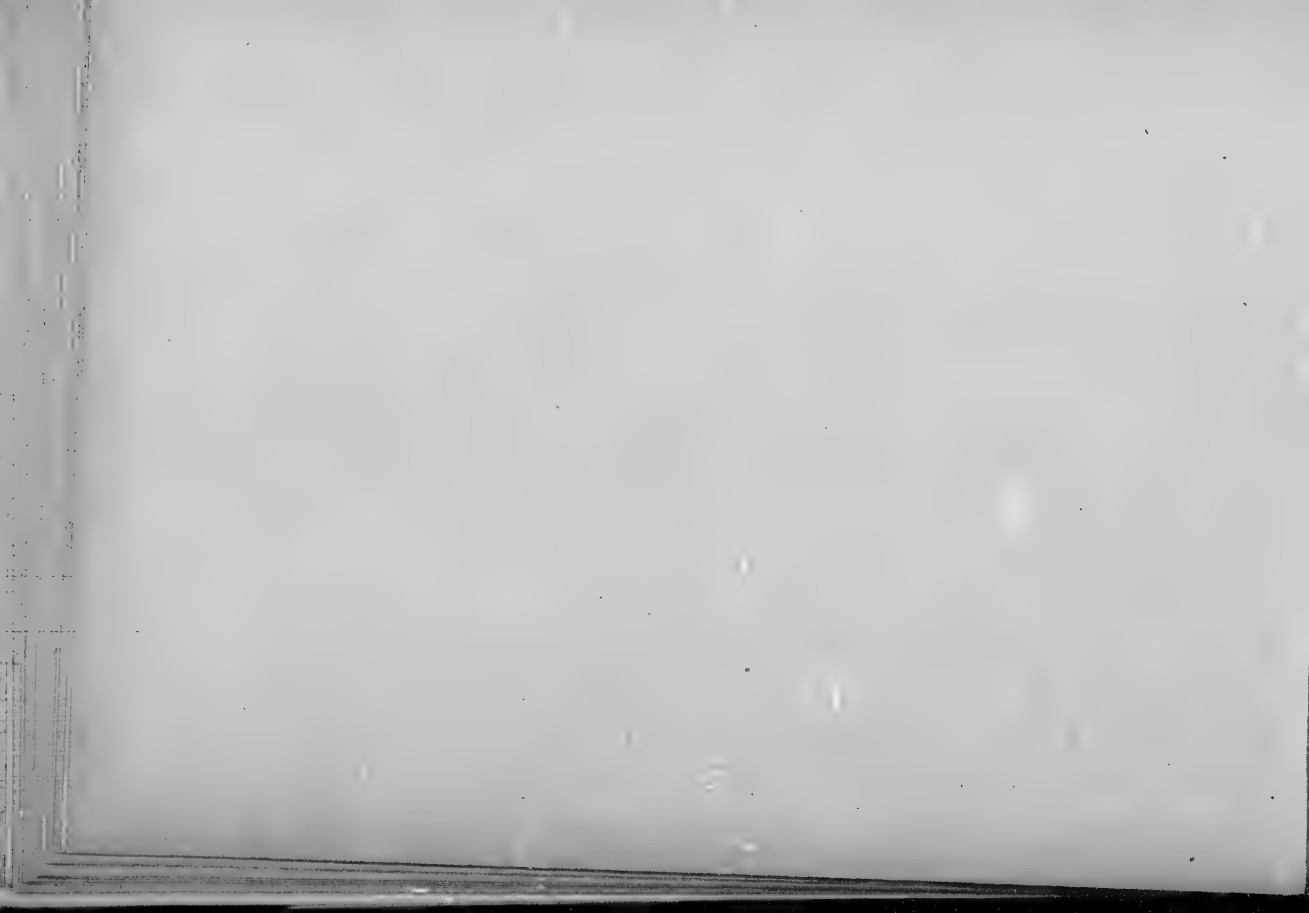
Gravenhurst, the steamer begins to thread its way through a succession of islands little, if at all, inferior in romantic beauty to those on the Upper St. Lawrence. The interest of the spectator is delightfully called forth at every turn. Now we are attracted by some tiny, moss-grown islet, a mere speck of rock above the water, but upon which, nevertheless, a few stunted specimens of the red pine of the region have contrived to gain a foothold. Anon, we brush the margin of a densely wooded island, whose shady ravines and hillsides are clothed with a vegetation almost tropical in its undisturbed luxuriance. A few more revolutions of the paddle-wheels, and we come upon a shapely point of land jutting far out into the water, its beautifully timbered surface sloping backward in a succession of gaily decked terraces, crowned, it may be, with a Swiss-looking chalet or summer-house, having a charming outlook down the lake. But while we are gazing entranced on the scene and longing to transfer bits of it to our sketch-book, the steamer, meanwhile, has traversed the long reach of gleaming water that fills the lower basin of Lake Muskoka; and for the next half-hour we skirt on our left two of the largest islands in the Lake, their banks laden with a tangled luxuriance of brushwood, bramble and wild flowers.

The first of these (Browning's Island) is partly owned, it will chill the heart of the lover of the picturesque to learn, by the Muskoka Mill and Lumber Company. The second ("Eilean Gowan") is a veritable Eden; and, as such, long may its woodland shrines be preserved from the desecrating hand of Commerce!

Arriving at the eastern front of the latter island we come upon the delta of the Muskoka River. Here the alluvial deposits washed down by the stream extend far into the lake and necessitate a wide detour in the *Nipissing's* path to enable the helmsman to strike the channel. The course of the Muskoka River is tortuous and full of surprises. At one time the steamer seems to be heading into a precipitous cliff fringed with forest, at another to be "boomed" by a mass of rank vegetation in the *cul de sac* of green. For six miles we pursue our sinuous course until the echoes of the steamer's whistle are borne back to us from the cascade heights of Bracebridge, beyond which lies the town. Bracebridge has long since achieved the distinction of being the metropolis of the Free Grant District, as it is the chief supply station for the sportsman and settler in the region; and for a time it was the only means of access to the many picturesque townships that lie to the eastward, where

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waters are drained by the two branches of the Muskoka River. Here, moreover, is the chief agency of the Immigration Bureau; and from this centre settlers were wont to be forwarded, in the early history of the district, to their locations, either about the lakes, or distributed at near or distant points along the Government colonization roads that penetrate the region. In winter, when the lakes are frozen, and Parry Sound and the Georgian Bay are, too, in the grip of the Ice-king, Bracebridge more than ever asserts its supremacy, for it then becomes the sole dependence of the inland settler for his extraneous wants, and to and from it come the passenger stage and the daily mail, together with the ample-robed conveyances of those who traffic in the woods. The extension of the railway from Gravenhurst to Lake Nipissing has of late shorn the town of not a little of both its summer and winter trade: but this is in part being made good by its growth as a manufacturing centre and in the industries useful to the settler. In and about the town there is much in the way of fine scenery. In full view of the tourist the Bracebridge Fall, sixty feet in height, displays its allurements as we approach the landing; and to those who are content with a superficial inspection of the cascade a view may be had without quitting

the steamer. But a stroll to the bridge that spans it, and an excursion to the South Falls of the Muskoka, some few miles from the town, are well worth a day's sojourn at Bracebridge, even if the tourist is unwilling to extend his trip to the series of lakes that lie to the north-east. To the canoeist, as well as to the sportsman, the whole region is unique in its attractions; the chain of connected waters, reached by way of the South Branch of the Muskoka River, embracing the Lake of Bays, Peninsula, Fairy, Vernon and Mary Lakes, and returning by the northern waters of the Muskoka, opens a panorama of thrilling pleasure and delight to those who enjoy Nature in seclusion. This attractive region can, however, be reached more directly from Huntsville, which the railway now passes; though we still recommend the old and favourite route, by stage or private conveyance from Bracebridge to Baysville, thence by steamer on the Lake of Bays, and, with a short portage, on to the extended chain of lakes northward to Huntsville and Hoodstown. In the lakes and streams of this section of the country the fishing is still good, while in the woods, in season, there is plenty of game. The tourist at Bracebridge should not omit a visit to the South Falls of the Muskoka River, which are extremely picturesque. A drive of some three

miles from the town will bring the visitor suddenly upon the cataract, for it is not seen until he pulls up on the bridge, a short distance from the upper basin. The scene is a wild one, the river shooting a series of ledges and making a descent of over a hundred feet in the space of three times as many yards. The visitor should view the Falls both from above and from below the "chute." Seen from the bridge, the river, which for miles has been sauntering along in idle dalliance, the dark forest crooning over the Stygian stream, suddenly awakes from its sleep, and flings itself headlong through a narrow, winding gorge, the sharp ledges of rock fretting it into foam, and here and there dashing the water up in spray with an impact that shivers it into beauty and lightens up the gloom of the beetling crags that overhang the torrent. At the foot of the cleft the river passes again into gloom and stillness, as it winds its way in swirling circles of white bells to the lake beyond. Approached by canoe from below, the view is a memorable one: the torrent, lashed into foam, hurling its mass of gleaming water down the ravine; the stern grandeur of the jutting cliffs, their gray walls moistened and black with the spray of ages; the bridge, clean cut against the sky, poised over the roaring abyss; and the weird pines on the summit singing eternal

dirges in harmony with the scene. The vision while it delights, also awes, and one is glad ere long to turn from it and get into the quiet beauty of still water, the sunshine glimmering softly down on the stream, or breaking in patches of light through the branches of the over-arching trees. But we leave the scene, and again return by the highway, the air filled with the resinous odours of the surrounding pine. As we re-enter the village a great burst of colour in the west throws a tinge of softened red on the dark green of the forest, and gilds the river with a flame of light.

Boarding the steamer again at Bracebridge, we set off down the river to regain the lake, and resume our trip to Port Carling and the head of the lake. At the *debouchment* of the river, the steamer is headed north-west for Beaumaris, or Tondern Island, the Anglesea of Muskoka waters, and one of the most attractive summer quarters of the lakes. Here, "at the height of the season," the scene recalls in miniature the arrival of the Ramsgate boat from London, the summer lodgers at Prowse's hotel close by having gathered at the wharf, either to meet or to part with friends, or to gratify curiosity by seeing "who's who" on the boat; while innumerable urchins, in every conceivable boating-costume, disport themselves in a



YOHU ISLAND, LAKE JOSEPH



PORT COCKBURN (HEAD OF LAKE JOSEPH)



AMATEUR REGATTA, LAKE JOSEPH.



24.



manner of craft on the waters of the bay. Due west from Beaumaris, in the western recesses of the lake, are the pretty village and Falls of Bala, and the outlet of the waters of Muskoka, by the Muskosh river, into the Georgian Bay. A mile or two to the west of the village, the Moon river, one of the finest streams for maskinonge and brook-trout, branches off from the Muskosh, and loses itself in the unsurveyed township of Freeman, or turns up, a western Congo, in the township of Congo. The scenery on the western waters of Muskoka easily rivals, if it does not surpass, that on the south and east; and to the angler and camper-out there open bewildering attractions in the innumerable lakes, bays, and islands of the region. Here, as elsewhere on the lakes, islands of every size and form rise in picturesque beauty from their glassy setting, the largest of them dense with forest to the waters edge. Many of them bear names well-known in the business and social circles of the Provincial capital, and the summer-houses of their owners peep at you, in every form of rusticity, as you pass on the steamer. Leaving Beaumaris the steamer is headed for the upper end of the lake, and threads its way through the Seven Sister Islands, an archipelago lying to the south of Point Kaye—on past Idlewild, One Tree, and Horse-shoe Islands—into

the converging channel of the Indian River and the lock at Port Carling, which admits to the waters of Rosseau and Joseph.

The view of the contracting channel that leads into the Indian River from the open lake is particularly pleasing. In early spring, when the woods put on their fresh robes, and in late autumn, when the frosts of October deck the leaves in their many hued beauty, the scene is surpassingly lovely. At both of these seasons Muskoka should be visited, though the spring-time, with its birth-crop of mosquitoes and black flies, detracts from the thorough enjoyment of Nature's unfolding beauty at that delightful period of the year. In the Fall, however, there is no alloy in the cup of the tourist's satisfaction, "barring" the coolness of the nights. With this exception, the latter part of September, in our opinion, is the most enjoyable time to spend a holiday in Muskoka. For families this, of course, is too late; though we often regret the hegira that takes place from the region with the opening of the city schools—a period of the year when Muskoka is seen at its best.

But the steamer's whistle breaks in upon these reflections, as we approach Port Carling, the Government lock on the Indian River, which gives access to the waters of the Upper Lakes. The

name of the village, with that of Port Sandfield, the site of the cutting between the waters of Rosseau and Joseph, recalls the early days of colonization in the region, when the Hon. John Carling was Minister of Public Works in the Local Government of John Sandfield Macdonald. The village has grown and become more attractive since then; while the comfortable and homelike hostelrys about, with their facilities on land and water for ministering to the enjoyment of those summering in the region, are a vast improvement on the engineer's or excavator's shanty, which was once the only accomodation of this "interlaken" stopping-place, save the rude shed, placarded "dynamite," in which was stored the material for blasting the basin of the lock and its water-approaches. Several good hotels, boarding-houses, stores, and two or three churches, with a few residences, a post office, and a lumber mill, comprise the buildings in the village. An unpretentious swing-bridge over the lock supplies the link of connection between Port Carling and Bracebridge. There is a pretty and sheltered sheet of water, just beyond the lock, on which there is good boating, and in the river above there is a little fishing. The scenery is wild and varied in the neighbourhood, and the village boasts of a special attraction

in the vicinity, in the charming bye path through the woods to Rockhurst, opposite Port Sandfield. Of the reality of this woodland conduit the writer of this sketch can vouch, for he has a vivid and pleasant memory of its delights.

A mile or two's steaming above the lock brings us to the upper end of the Indian River and to the foot of Lake Rosseau. Here we come to what many consider the prettiest part of the lakes. From Baker's Island round to Ferndale, Eagle's Nest, and on to Port Sandfield, the steamer's pathway is fairly gemmed with a profusion of islets, many of which are owned by Toronto citizens, of known aquatic tastes, and whose summer cottages peer out of their sylvan settings at every bend of the lake. As we pass the foot of this channel, on our way to Windermere and the head of Rosseau, the evening sun paves it with flame. If ever there was an Eden, we think, we must find it here. Seldom has our eye lit upon a lovelier scene, we have repeatedly remarked, as its beauty has again and again been impressed upon our mental vision, and never, to our mind, has Nature made a more effective use of her materials. Sky, and land, and water, here all combine to make a perfect picture, the effect of which, particularly when the woods are ablaze with the

26.

PLEASURE STEAM LAUNCH, PORT COCKBURN.



28.

KEEWAYDIN, LAKE JOSEPH.



25.

NAVIGATION CO'S STEAMER - PORT COCKBURN.



27.

CLIFF ISLAND, LITTLE LAKE JOSEPH



colouring of a Canadian autumn, is almost indescribable. Here the hemlocks mass up, in spots familiar to us, with an effect that would ravish an artist's heart, their lighter colours and more graceful forms relieving the sombre character of the intermingling spruce and pine.

Traversing the foot of Lake Rosseau, we strike due north till we reach Windermere, which has few visible attractions from the steamer to remind one of its English namesake, though back from the water-front there is a commodious hotel and pleasant summer quarters, and within reach of a short walk, there is an alluring sheet of water locally known as the Three Mile Lake. For the next hour we steam alongside the eastern flank of Big (Tobin's) Island, which looks as if it had fallen accidentally from the shoulder of some giant aloft, and had escaped being chopped up into the little islands which strew the lake with their tree-tufted beauty. The coast-line on either side, as we proceed northward, preserves its pleasing irregularity, and in parts is quite pretty. Presently we touch at Juddhaven, of which, however little is seen but the wharf and lone postal landing-waiter. On the opposite side of the lake is Skeleton Bay, the *entrepot* for the waters of Skeleton Lake and River. On the latter are the beautiful Minne-

haha Falls, and in the bosom of the former the disciples of Izaak Walton will find abounding sport. To the northward still continuing our voyage, we come to Rosseau Falls, the poetry of its name disappearing with an impatient glance at its saw mills. The shadows of evening will have begun to close on the scene as we reach Rosseau village and the high wooded bluffs that give character and beauty to the head of the lake. Just before reaching the village and the steamer's moorings for the night, stoppage is made at Maplehurst, the fine new summer hotel which makes good the loss, some years ago, of the renowned hostelry of Pratt. The hotel aims at maintaining the traditions, with the state and circumstance, of its burnt prototype; and the glitter of lights, bespeaking comfort and good cheer, that sheds its radiance down the steep ascent from the wharf, with the dress-parade of fashion we meet on the hotel-galleries as we approach the house, are indications that the ambition of its proprietors is in part at least realized. Not the least of the attractions of "Maplehurst" is its charming situation, with its magnificent outlooks down and across the lake, and the comfort which comes, even in the hottest day in summer, from its breezy, elevated position. Added to this are

the advantages of large and commodious sleeping rooms, dining rooms, and parlours, with comparative freedom from that bane of most watering-place hotels—the slattern, hugger-mugger domestic economy and table-service which too often attaches to them. In the village, across the bay, further and good hotel accomodation may be had in the "Monteith House," with excellent boating facilities, and the opportunity of driving or walking along the colonization roads that branch off from the village in various directions. At Rosseau, as elsewhere on the lakes, the visitor will find the same common, yet attractive, features that characterize the region—the water, the sky, and the surrounding gloomy woods. Besides these, and the invigorating ozone of a high northern latitude, there are the usual accessories of a Muskoka watering-place—the shelving rocks and the muslined womanhood that people them; the boats and the young paddlers that swarm about them; the islands and the boating and fishing parties that resort to them. Rosseau, however, has one distinguishing feature over its fellow watering-places, in the rare and exclusive possession of a half-magical stream, poetically christened "Shadow River."

Every visitor to Rosseau must see "Shadow

River," as every visitor to Scotland must see the Trosachs, Abbotsford, or the Tweed. It is the show-place of the region, and unlike most show-places, it is worth seeing. This magical stream, which varies from twenty to forty feet in width, can be explored by row-boats for about four miles. It issues into Lake Rosseau in one of the bays at the upper end of the lake, near the village of Rosseau, and within a mile of Maplehurst. The channel mouth is difficult to find, in the mass of reeds and pond-lilies which conceal the entrance to its waters—nature guarding in this way the intrusion of all but those who are in sympathy with its hidden charms. Once launched upon the stream, the visitor to this inner shrine of nature will instantly surrender himself to the illusions of the place. Here, verily, he will say, is the home of the Naiades; and at every bend of the river he will look to see a trooping band of the deities who preside over streams, springs, wells and fountains, issue forth from the woods or meadows on either side, to sport among the reeds and rushes on the banks, deck themselves with water-lilies in the gleaming mirror, or take their afternoon plunge in the glassy pools of the stream. The silence of the place heightens the effect and imparts irresistible witchery to the scene. As the boat glides



INDIAN PADDLE-NEAR ROSSEAU.

HEAD OF LAKE ROSSEAU.



A BIT OF FOLIAGE-SHADOW RIVER.





along under miles of over-arching trees, every rood of water has its surprise. In its magical depths each separate tree, branch and leaf, is mirrored and minutely reproduced, while the sky overhead has a nether sky to match it, till the on-looker finds it difficult to say where the real and tangible ends and the mirrored copy begins. In the duplicating process, boat, occupants, and dripping oars are included, as well as the flight across the stream of the startled bird whose privacy we have invaded, and every feather of whose outstretched pinions is momentarily reproduced in the water beneath.

At Rosseau, though we are over a hundred and fifty miles north of Toronto, the village is, as it were, but a flounce on the flowing garment of civilization. Away inland stretches a kingdom that in winter might be ruled by a Jarl-King of Norway, and in summer by a successor to the Doges of Venice. In the Parry Sound and Muskoka Districts there some seventy townships, covering an area of six or seven thousand square miles. Of these townships, less than seven are watered by the Muskoka Lakes; we are therefore only on the frontier of a realm of solitude. The colonization road to the Magnetewan, and on to Lake Nipissing, which runs almost due north from

Rosseau, gives access to much of this territory, though it can be more conveniently reached from Gravenhurst and the south by the railway extension to Callendar. The Magnetewan region is the Mecca of sportsmen, for here in lavish plenty is to be found every variety of fish and game. The river traverses an immense tract of country, and, with its affluents, may be said to water half the District of Parry Sound. The tourist or sportsman will find Burk's Falls the objective point for this region, and to those who desire "fresh fields and pastures new," we confidently commend a holiday on the Magnetewan. At the Burk House the visitor will find hotel accommodation little inferior to that of the Queen's or Rossin in Toronto. Near by is the steamboat landing and the moorings of the *Wenonah*, on which the tourist can make a most delightful eighty-mile excursion, between breakfast and supper, and see the picturesque solitudes of the Magnetewan River, and the smiling beauty of Se-Sebe and Ah Mio Lakes.

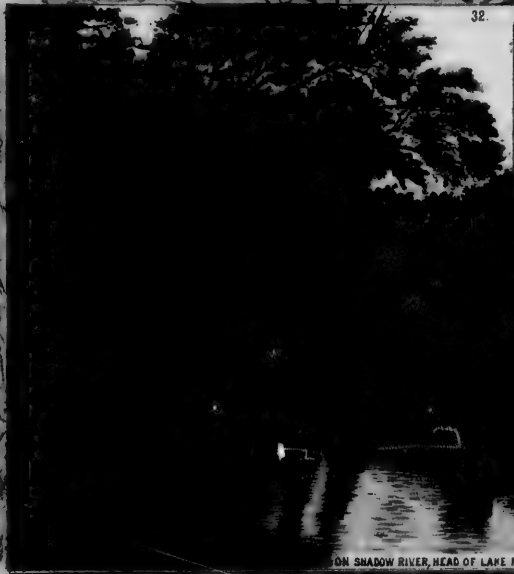
We return to Rosseau. The traveller, should he decide to confine his present excursion to the Muskoka Lakes, may pursue one of two courses in proceeding to Lake Joseph. Either he may return by steamer to Port Carling, and set out from

there for Port Sandfield and sail up the lake, or—the course we would commend—take the stage, or hire a conveyance at Rosseau village and go over the Parry Sound colonization road, just north of the lakes, to Port Cockburn and the head waters of Lake Joseph. Should he take the latter route, a day can be delightfully spent by turning aside to Thomson's hotel, on Star Lake, where there is good fishing and very pleasant accommodation; proceeding afterwards to "Fraser's," at the head of Lake Joseph. At Port Cockburn the tourist will find most comfortable quarters, a large sprinkling of the fashion of Toronto and the towns and cities of the south, and unlimited facilities for boating, shooting, or fishing. In many respects Lake Joseph is more attractive than the other waters of the Muskoka chain; and as a family resort Port Cockburn is consequently a vigorous rival to the other watering-places of the region. No one, we believe, leaves "Fraser's" without pleasant memories of the place.

The route homeward from Port Cockburn may lead us either directly down the lakes to Gravenhurst, or by stage or private conveyance over the rough but picturesque road to Parry Sound, thence by steamer to Penetanguishene, through the maze of islands that gem the inshore waters

of the Georgian Bay. Should the tourist prefer the latter, he will meet much to interest and please the eye in the succession of lakes that vein the region on the way to Parry Sound, while, if a sportsman, he will find infinite satisfaction in extending his excursion north-eastward from Parry Sound as far as McKellar or Dunchurch, the Venices of the North, returning thither by a series of natural canals and the Seguin River to the Canadian Adriatic—the inner waters of the Georgian Bay. Whichever his choice, despite the solitude and the "roughing it," he may be assured of both pleasure and sport. The dominant trade of Parry Sound is lumber, and though a universal industry in the region, and thus not to be lightly spoken of, its operations greatly detract from its picturesque situation and mar the aspect which Nature strives to produce in the beautiful water-courses of the district. But for this Parry Harbour and Sound would be an unrivalled artistic possession; though, once out on the Archipelago of the Georgian Bay, Nature asserts herself in regal fashion. The coast-line from Byng Inlet at the mouth of the Magnetewan, or rather from French River, a little to the north, down to the outlet of the Severn, in Matchedash Bay, is chafed and frayed in a marvellous manner: ten thousand

32.



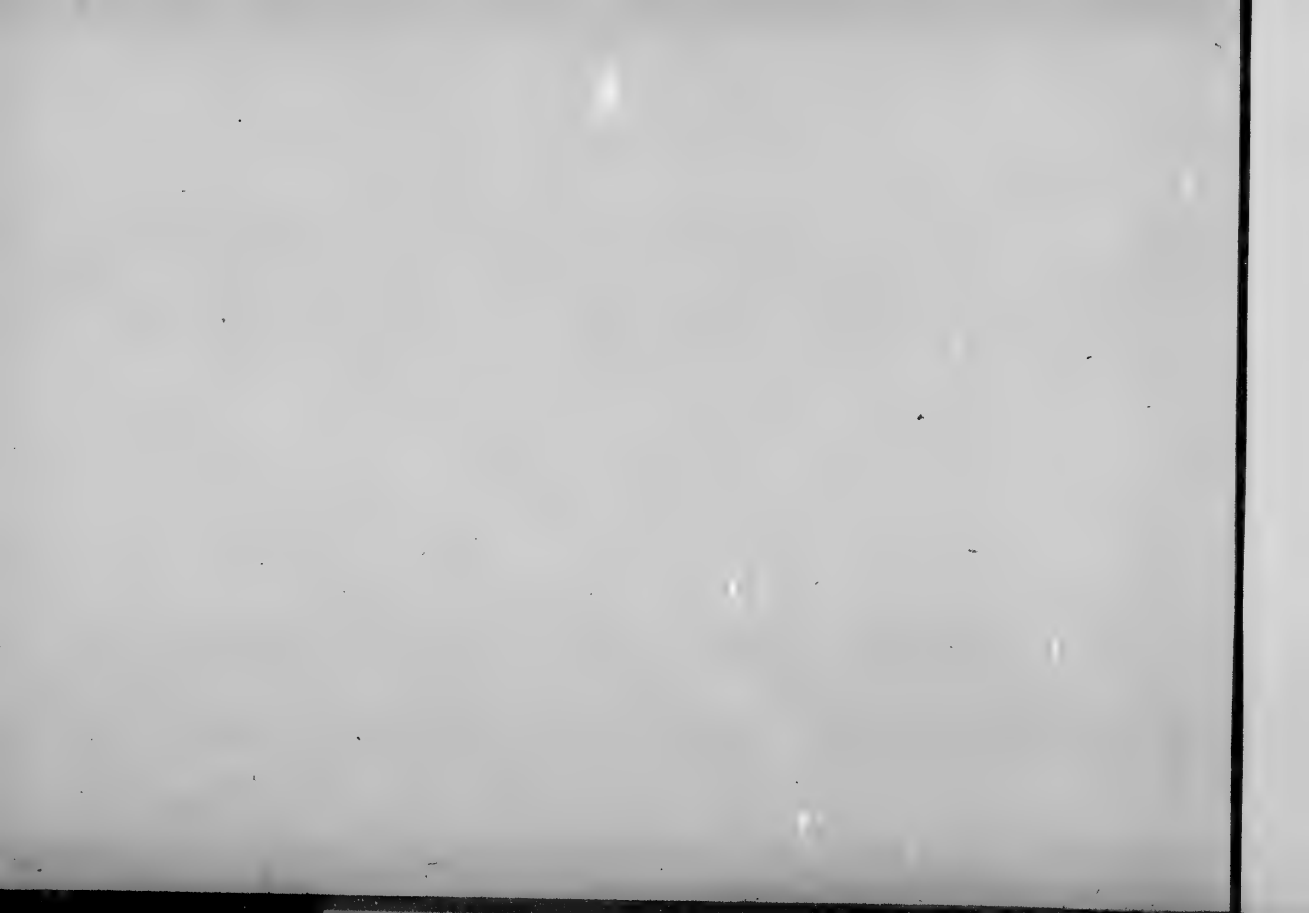
ON SHADOW RIVER, HEAD OF LAKE ROSSEAU.

33.



ROSSEAU VILLAGE.





islands are said to bestrew the path of the steamer from Parry Sound to Penetanguishene. At the latter village—historically famed, in connection with the early French Missions, and with the British naval occupation of the place in the opening years of the present century—as well as at the adjoining village of Midland, railway facilities can be had to conduct the tourist southward to his home and civilization. Both villages, and Wau-
baushene, close by, are rapidly making new history for the region, aided by the railways, which at Penetanguishene and at Midland, tap the commerce of the inner shores of Lake Huron. On these waters the M. & N. Navigation Co's. steamers, *Imperial* and *F. B. Maxwell*, will be found conveniently at the tourist's service.

The bulk of travel from Port Cockburn will, presumably, seek to return by way of the lakes. With this in view, we shall now board the *Kenosha* or the *Nipissing*, and conclude our tour by a run down Lake Joseph into Lake Muskoka, and so back to Gravenhurst. Setting out from "Fraser's," we shall be favoured if we are convoyed for a little by the fine pleasure steam yacht, *Onaganoh*, owned by the enterprising proprietors of Summit House. Whether or not this compliment is paid the parting guests of the hotel, they will find a

vista of rare beauty to rejoice the eye for many miles down the lake. The places of interest passed *en route* are many and memorable. A little way down we come to Morris, McMurrich, and Mac-
lennan islands, which nestle under the lea of Equity Crest. Farther on, other posies of islands are met with; then we run into "McLean's," on Shanty Bay, and emerge into the lake again in the neighbourhood of Yoho. The island of Yoho, or, if the strange mouthful, "Yohocucaba," can be grappled with, is one of the prettiest and most cultivated of the islands on the lake. It is the apple of the eye of the Muskoka Club, an early organization of campers, whose advent and many summers' visits to the region haunt the memory of its modern discoverers with yet unchilled delight. Its seemingly Indian appellation is in reality a conglomerate polysyllable, made up of the first letters in the surnames of the island's original owners. Still further on we come to the islands of the Ponemah group, that stand warder at the entrance to Little Lake Joseph. The larger of the group is called Chief Island (owned by Mr. Herbert Mason), and from it may be seen the long water lane of Little Lake Joseph and the delightfully situated summer hotel of Craigie-Lea. In this neighbourhood is Governor's Island, the at-

tractive summer quarters of an ex-Lieut.-Governor, and here the lake seems to rise to the height of its fascination, and to clasp in its jewelled embrace a galaxy of islands, a summer sojourn upon which must be a perpetual and delirious pic-nic. Continuing our descent of the lake we come upon Hemlock Point, the woodland home of the hydrographer of the lakes, in the vicinity of which may be met with one or other of the fine steam launches which Captain Rogers' enterprise has placed at the service of tourists and pleasure-seekers on these waters. From here to the Government canal that cuts the sandbar, which the waters of Joseph and Rosseau have jointly thrown up to estrange the lakes, little calls for notice. But here, at Port Sandfield, we come upon another delightful stopping place, where the tourist will do well to sojourn for a while. There is at "Prospect House" commodious and comfortable accommodation; and the scenery in the neighbourhood, especially between Port Sandfield and Port Carling, is perhaps unrivalled on the whole chain of lakes. On the beautiful bay opposite "Cox's" there is good fishing and boating, as there is also in a number of bays and inlets to the south of the canal.

The sail round the peninsula from Port Sandfield to Port Carling is perhaps the most enjoyable

on the lakes. The water-way is strewn with islands, and we have to thread our path through clumps of green in a setting of silver, and past innumerable points, heavily wooded to the shore, the whole forming a panorama of exquisite and impressive beauty. The points of call are many, for here the hotels and summer houses abound, attesting popular appreciation of the attractiveness of the region. Among these are Cleveland, to the north of the Joseph River; Oaklands, on Tobin's Island, and Ferndale, in a pretty bay, just north-west of Port Carling. All of these resorts, with those at Port Sandfield and Carling, give increasing accommodation to the throng of visitors that frequent the lakes in the summer months. But we must take leave of the region, permitting the tourist to find his way back at his pleasure to Gravenhurst, and to wherever may be his home in the south. If our pen has been faithful, the reader of these pages, will be slow to dismiss from his mind the beauties of Muskoka, or to forget, if he has accompanied us on our tour, the most attractive of Ontario's forest and lakeland shrines—the lovely "Edens of the (Northern) wave."

THE END.

PARRY SOUND.

35.



34.



BURK'S FALLS, MAGUETEWAN RIVER.

